

May 1965

our bat-winged
agent in the heavens—
the U-2—is still

MASTER SPY OF

heroic saga of the
edge-of-space pilots who
rub elbows with death
almost every day—bringing
back the aerial espionage
that can spell the difference
between life and death
for the free world

by MARV KOEPEL

FORMOSAN peasants looked up from their back-breaking labor on the edge of Gaifun air base on the outskirts of Taipei as a huge pair of wings roared low overhead. The unusually noisy jet engine thundered as the sound of its roar bounced off the mucky rice paddies.

Another one of the strange metal birds was taking off, one of the mayeegwawk birds that the peasants usually associated with the United States—the giver of all military weapons and equipment on the island governed by the Chiang Kai-shek. It was mid-September 1964 and the flight of this unmarked aircraft would write a prelude to history.

